

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to include my statement in the RECORD. I will paraphrase it in the interests of time.

First, I want to congratulate Chairman SERRANO in being the pioneer chairman of the newly created Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee. He has given us great leadership in a bipartisan, inclusive spirit while shepherding this bill through the subcommittee. Additionally, my colleagues on the subcommittee on both sides have provided valuable input and guidance. The chairman has mentioned the hard work of the staff on both the majority and minority. I won't reiterate that, but I will say we have had great staff help for both majority and the minority.

I am pleased to present this Financial Services bill. We have taken into consideration the priorities of the President and the Members of the House, and I think we have produced a bill that meets the needs of Americans and our operations of government while staying below the President's budget request, which is somewhat unusual for most of the Appropriations Committee bills. I appreciate the leaders of the Appropriations Committee, Chairman OBEY and Ranking Member LEWIS, in providing a manageable allocation for the bill.

We allocate, as the chairman has said, \$21.4 billion in discretionary budget authority. This is \$243 million below the administration's request, but it is \$2 billion above fiscal year 2007. This is in recognition of some additional responsibilities that we have.

It provides funding for a diverse number of agencies that affect the lives of all Americans. Twenty-seven different agencies are funded in this bill: Telecommunications; IRS Taxpayer Assistance; Small Business Administration, an interesting group; the General Services Administration; and also the Office of Personnel Management.

I want to mention here that in testimony, I was struck by the fact that the director of the Office of Personnel Management said that in the next 10 years, 60 percent of the workforce will retire. I would say to any young people that are listening tonight there will be a lot of opportunity in the Federal Government.

Another point that was made in the hearing was that only 15 percent of the Federal employment is in Washington, D.C., which means that there will be job opportunities all across the country. I would urge young people that are in political science or have an interest in government to think about getting the skills that might be useful in working in Federal employment. This would, of course, be some budget experience, some tax policy and some general policy of government. There will be opportunities and exciting challenges.

We have the Small Business Development Centers. Sometimes I think we only think about the big ones in terms of businesses, but it is the thousands and thousands of small businesses that really fuel this Nation's economy. I know in my own district, if you add up the 50, the 75 and the 100-employee businesses, that is a very significant total. Those businesses don't tend to go overseas. They don't sell out and move their operations somewhere offshore. They stay. Therefore, I think it is extremely important that we help small business in every possible way.

We do that in this bill. We have \$100 million for Small Business Development Centers. This is an increase. It is a method, a way of providing management assistance. Just in Ohio alone, we have over almost 900,000 small businesses. Every dollar we invest in this leverages a couple of dollars in economic activity.

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Another interesting thing in the bill is financial literacy. We hear a lot of comment about the fact that our young people don't know how to handle credit cards, they don't know how to handle their loans, and they get themselves in financial trouble. We have allocated in this bill \$900,000 for the Treasury's Office of Financial Education. This is some \$200,000 over the President's request.

What I would like to do is urge that Treasury work with the Department of Education and move some of this responsibility to them to work with the schools, the elementary and high schools, in improving financial literacy in this country. Credit is extremely important, and too often young people do not understand the impact of building credit card debt and other types of debt which gets them in substantial financial trouble. So we hope that we can encourage a greater amount of financial education among the students of this Nation.

We also hear a lot about the fact that \$300 billion of taxes are left uncollected. As Mr. DREIER pointed out on the statement on the rule, most people pay their taxes. The United States is unique, probably in some respects in that we have a voluntary system of paying taxes, but people want to know that if they pay their taxes, they want their neighbor and their fellow citizens to also pay theirs.

If there is this \$300 billion tax gap, we need to do something to address it, so we have set aside the money for taxpayer support services. And I might say, for those that are listening out in the audience across the country, that many people are not aware of the fact that there is a Taxpayer Assistance Service. It is available in most of the major cities of the country, and they can be very helpful to people who have some type of problem with IRS. We said some years ago that we want to make the IRS more taxpayer friendly, and we have tried to do that in this bill.

The chairman mentioned the District of Columbia. I often think about President Reagan, who talked about the city of Washington being the "shining city on the hill." What we try to do in this bill is to move this city a little bit further along in that direction.

The District of Columbia, and we recently changed their voting status, is the Capital of this Nation and a city we should all take pride in. So what we have tried to do in this bill, since we fund D.C., their Federal money, is to make it a better city.

I want to say I think the Mayor is recognizing the challenge that is before him. They have made a dramatic change in their school system. Now the Mayor is responsible and accountable, and I am hopeful that this will make a vast improvement over a period of time in education.

The key to a successful city is a successful education system. One of the things that plagues the cities of America is the fact that they do have problems with their system, and they have a high rate of dropouts. We hope we can change that not only in the District of Columbia, but in every city in America.

If our Nation is to remain competitive in the years to come, we have to start with the education system. I am pleased that the Mayor and the city leadership here recognize that fact. We put \$35 million for college tuition assistance, \$41 million for school improvement, and \$10 million to improve libraries. I know the Mayor has selected a new superintendent. We wish her well. We want to do everything we can to make her administration and that of the Mayor a success in dealing with education problems.

The chairman mentioned the Election Assistance Commission. This is, of course, designed to make sure that everybody has an opportunity to vote. That is, again, fundamental to our democracy, that people have not only the right to vote, but that we make it as uncomplicated as possible so they do make the effort to exercise their franchise. I think, perhaps, the \$300 million is not necessarily required at this time because the Presidential primaries will start in January, and the States are already sitting on \$1.3 billion, but we can perhaps address that issue in conference.

The loan program, I am a little concerned. We are giving \$80 million to help subsidize loans where there is a default. Historically this is funded by a premium on both the borrowers and lenders, and I am hoping that we can work out a program that will encourage people to use the loan program.

Private debt collectors, we don't know. We have kept that in place with a very limited amount of money because we are not sure how effective that program is, but I think the Treasury would argue that it has been a successful program.